

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /085 W

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R 161628Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1995

INFO AMEMOISSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: THE WILSON CABINET SHUFFLE: IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH
JACK

REF: (A) LONDON 8981 (B) LONDON 8089

SUMMARY - IF TRIBUNE LEFT-WING RECALCITRANTS (REF A) EX-
PECTED SUPPORT FOR THEIR ATTACK ON WILSON'S CABINET

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CHANGES LAST WEEK, THEY GOT COLD COMFORT INDEED FROM THE

MAN FROM WHOM THEY OFTEN SOUGHT SOLACE AND SUPPORT IN THE PAST - JACK JONES. THE TUC LEADER, DURING HIS TALK WITH LONDON-BASED LABOR ATTACHES (REF B) SAID THE ATTACK WAS WRONG, AS WAS JUDITH HART'S DECISION TO TURN DOWN THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY OFFERED HER BY PRIME MINISTER WILSON. JONES SAID THAT HE WAS IN GENERAL "SATISFIED" WITH THE CABINET CHANGES, BUT WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE PRENTICE OUT OF THE CABINET. HE FULLY ACCEPTED THAT THE REFERENDUM RESULT HAD CLEARLY STRENGTHENED WILSON'S OVERALL POLITICAL POSITION, WHICH HE SAID WAS "NOT RIGHT-WING BUT CENTRIST". THE ISSUE ON WHICH THE TUC WOULD PART COMPANY WITH WILSON CLEARLY REMAINS THE RE-IMPOSITION OF STATUTORY WAGE CONTROLS (REF B). END SUMMARY.

1. THE TUC LEADER CHARACTERIZED THE UPROAR ABOUT THE BENN SHIFT AS "AMOUNTING TO NOTHING". HE THOUGHT THE RECENT ATTACK BY THE PLP TRIBUNE GROUP COMPLAINING ABOUT THE WILSON SHIFTS (REF A) WAS "WRONG". HE WAS QUITE "SATISFIED" WITH WILSON'S ACTIONS, INCLUDING THE BENN SHIFT, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE REG PRENTICE OUT OF THE CABINET ALTOGETHER. (HE WAS THOROUGHLY OPPOSED TO WHAT HE ALLEGED WAS PRENTICE'S BELIEF IN CO-ALITION, ADDING THAT HE RESENTED PRENTICE'S BEHAVIOUR IN THIS AND OTHER MATTERS "AFTER ALL WE HAVE DONE FOR HIM. WE - THE TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION - MADE HIM.") BUT AT THE SAME TIME, JONES SHED NO TEARS FOR JUDITH HART'S ATTEMPTED POLITICAL MARTYRDOM WHEN SHE WAS SACKED AS MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT. JONES SAID SHE WAS "FOOLISH" FOR NOT ACCEPTING WILSON'S OFFER OF THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY WHICH JONES BELIEVES IS AN IMPORTANT JOB. (QUITE APPROPRIATELY, SINCE HE IS A TRANSPORT UNION LEADER.) "JUDITH HART", HE CONCLUDED, "SHOULD NOT HAVE PERSONALIZED THE ISSUE."

3. JONES READILY ACCEPTED THE VIEW THAT THE REFERENDUM VICTORY HAD VERY CLEARLY STRENGTHENED WILSON'S POSITION, BUT HE EMPHASIZED THAT WILSON WAS A "CENTRIST" AND NOT "RIGHT-WING". JONES IMPLICITLY ACCEPTED THE WILSON VIEW THAT HE WAS CONTINUING TO FOLLOW THE LABOR PARTY MANIFESTO. JONES ALSO CLEARLY REJECTED THE VIEW THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHIFT OF BENN WAS DESIGNED TO UNDERMINE THE INDUSTRY BILL AS SOME OF THE TRIBUNITES HAVE ALLEGED. HE NOTED THAT CERTAIN LIMITING AMENDMENTS TO THE INDUSTRY BILL HAD BEEN MADE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, AND WHILE HE DID NOT LIKE THESE AMENDMENTS, THEY WERE PART OF THE GIVE-AND-TAKE OF A NEGOTIATED INSTRUMENT. (JONES, MOREOVER, HAS A HIGH OPINION OF ERIC VARLEY, WHO IS BENN'S SUCCESSOR. IN A LIST-

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ING OF POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO HAROLD WILSON, JONES NAMED CALLAGHAN IF WILSON WERE TO GO "TOMORROW", HEALEY "IN TWO YEARS", BENN "AFTER THAT" AND THEN VARLEY. JONES SAID "LOOK OUT FOR VARLEY, HE'S A VERY ABLE MAN".)

4. JONES ALSO HAD SOME KIND WORDS TO SAY FOR AN OLD FOE -- FORMER CONSERVATIVE LEADER, TED HEATH, WHOM HE LIKES "PERSONALLY". JONES BELIEVES THAT MARGARET THATCHER WILL NOT LAST AS LEADER UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION AND THAT HEATH IS VERY LIKELY TO MAKE A COMEBACK. HE THOUGHT THAT HEATH DID VERY WELL DURING THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN WHILE MARGARET THATCHER WAS NOT EFFECTIVE. (DURING A RECENT CONVERSATION, FORMER TUC GENERAL SECRETARY LORD FEATHER GAVE US A VERY SIMILAR ASSESSMENT OF THE TWO CONSERVATIVE LEADERS.)

5. JONES' COMMENTS ON THE TUC'S FUTURE ROLE IN THE EC, AND ITS POSITION ON SEVERAL OTHER INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WILL BE DISCUSSED IN SEPTTEL.

6. COMMENT: JONES' COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION CONFIRM THE GENERALLY-HELD VIEW THAT ONE OF HIS MAJOR CONCERNS IS TO KEEP THE LABOR PARTY INTACT. HIS MUTED ROLE DURING THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, HIS READY ACCEPTANCE OF ITS RESULTS, AND HIS DISDAIN OF THE THUNDERING ON THE LEFT ALL TESTIFY TO THIS. HOWEVER, HE HAS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT IF WILSON WERE TO OPT ULTIMATELY FOR A STATUTORY INCOMES POLICY, HE -- AND PRESUMABLY THE TUC -- WOULD NOT COOPERATE. FOR JONES, WAGES POLICY IS ABSOLUTELY A VITAL INTEREST AND WHILE HE IS ENDEAVORING TO HELP RESOLVE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WITH HIS INITIATIVE ON WAGES (REF B), HE IS DRAWING A LINE NOW WHICH, IN EFFECT, HE IS URGING WILSON NOT TO CROSS EXCEPT AT HIS OWN POLITICAL PERIL.
RICHARDSON

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